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Bairds go from family farm to major meat producer

Leigh Ann Tipton / Advocate Editor latipton@ucadvocate.com

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Ask Jimmie and Linda Baird how a farming family came to be the driving forces behind a multi-million dollar Uniontown meat packing operation, and they'll tell you that, by the grace of God, "it just happened."

They were at the right places at the right time, and the pieces fell into place.

But Union County Economic Development executive director Paul Monsour said their success has a lot to do with two things - the vision and drive of Jimmie Baird.

In the 80s, Jimmie Baird was solely a hog farmer in Union County. He came to know David Simmons, another pork producer, through the hog industry, and they eventually became brother-in-laws and business partners.

The two combined their pork producing farms to create Union County Livestock, which became the largest pork producer in the state of Kentucky.

When Barron's Meats in Morganfield came up for sale in 1991, David, his wife Connie, and the Bairds decided to purchase the meat packing business.

And thus, Jim David's was born.

The name became synonymous with great-tasting, mouth-watering meats and products. People couldn't seem to get enough of Jim David's products, which was just what the four founders wanted.

In 1997, Jim David's moved from its Morganfield location to the Baird's family farm on the outskirts of Uniontown. They did a lot of custom processing for area farmers and deer hunters as well as mass-production.

Word of Jim David's fine-tasting foods spread, and soon some of the area's most notable restaurants - like Wolf's Bar-B-Q in Evansville and Moonlite Bar-B-Que Inn in Owensboro -- were serving up Jim David meats.

It was in that business venture that Jimmie Baird began developing pre-cooked hams that area businesses could use for gifts to employees. He processed 300 hams in that first year and 3,000 the next.

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